

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

In the specification, please amend paragraph no. 20 on pages 4 – 5 and replace it with the following rewritten paragraphs:

Referring now to the accompanying drawings, FIGS. 1-4 illustrate a preferred embodiment of this invention. FIG. 1 illustrates one view of apparatus of this invention which has been installed on footwear in the form of a shoe 10, partially broken away. As depicted, shoe 10 is comprised of a sole 12 and an upper footwear portion 14 connected thereto. Upper footwear portion 14 includes two flap portions 11 and 13, which in turn include a plurality of eyelets 16 so that portions 11 and 13 define a plurality of apertures 18 through which a lace 20 has been threaded. Lace 20 has two free ends 22, 22 which, although not required, are proximate to the front end, i.e., the end opposite from the heel (not shown) of shoe 10, and which are connected to one another by connecting means in the form of a plastic clamp 24, thereby placing lace 20 in the form of a continuous loop.

Lace 20 also is threaded through mechanical locking means in the form of a wheel lock-type cord fastener 26, the configuration of which is fully described in U.S. Pat. No. 3,564,670 to Bengtsson. An example of a similarly suitable fastener of this type may be seen in U.S. Pat. No. 5,477,593 to Leick. Leick discloses a locking device for a lace. The locking device includes a body, a circular shaped locking wheel, and a pusher. A cavity within the body receives the wheel and allows the wheel to move longitudinally with respect to the body. The pusher attaches to the wheel and actuates the wheel along the length of the body. As shown in Figures 5 and 6 of Leick, each end of a lace are fed through an input aperture and an output aperture so that the lace is located between the locking wheel and an inside wall of the body. The locking of the strands of the laces occurs by a wedging effect via the cooperation of the body and the wheel. Fastener 26 receives the lace and is configured to releasably lock at least two portions of lace 20 in proximity with one another, to thereby secure the lace, and in turn the portions of footwear upper portion 14 through which the lace is threaded, together. A loop segment 28 extends from fastener 26.